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BOOK REVIEWS

LLOYD GEORGE: THE MAN AND HIS STORY. By Frank Dilnot. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Unquestionably the two greatest men in the world of international affairs to-day are President Wilson and Lloyd George, and as these two men together will have a very large share in the readjustment of things when the great world strife is over, it is the duty of every thoughtful American citizen to inform himself fully as to the career and character of the present Prime Minister of England. Mr. Dilnot, who has had rare opportunities to observe the man in public and private life, traces his spectacular rise from the home of a humble, obscure cobbler in Wales to the stately house on Downing Street. As Mr. Dilnot tells it, the story is far more interesting than any romance, because it is true, and because it records the struggles of a man who, through courage, sublime faith in his country, keen intellect, hard and unremitting labor, has won his way in the face of opposition and abuse, and solely on his own merits has become the virtual ruler of the greatest nation on earth.

To many of his countrymen he seemed at first a veritable fire-brand, a mob orator, a demagogue of the worst and most dangerous type, but even his enemies to-day are forced to acknowledge that he has become the savior of the nation. "I have seen Lloyd George," says Mr. Dilnot, "in a hundred capacities, electrifying a multitude, in the thick of battle with the cleverest minds of Parliament, attacking to their faces with relentless ferocity men of the noblest descent in Britain, and yet I know of nothing in his life which approaches in interest his relations with his old village friends of long ago. They like him for himself, and not for what he has become, though they are so proud of him." He has a sensitive soul and a kindly heart, together with the imagination of a poet; but in dealing with wrong or injustice, wherever he may see examples of it, he is utterly fearless, even bitter in his attacks, meeting scorn with scorn, and matching invective with invective. Altogether unconventional in habits and in methods of work, even laying himself open to criti-

cism on the score of inaccuracy in details, he accomplishes his purpose through intensive efficiency without mechanical routine and red tape, for in every office he has occupied he has broken all precedents and defied all rules. His very lack of formality, his open-mindedness and approachableness, his fiery zeal, his unconquerable enthusiasm, all serve to explain his powers of leadership; for he is not only a wonderful organizer, but a man among men, inspiring by his own example, convincing by his sincerity, his pertinacity, his shrewdness, his sense of fairplay. By means of such qualities he settled in one day the great strike of the miners in South Wales, and it was through him largely that England was led eventually to adopt the unpopular policy of conscription.

Tragic as was the death of Kitchener, it came at just the psychological moment for Lloyd George, for then his work as Minister of Munitions was practically done, and he, more than any other man in the kingdom, was fitted to take up the duties of War Minister. He at once associated with him General Sir William Robertson, a man after his own heart, a "soldier who had risen from the ranks, a quiet man who would stand no nonsense, and one who knew modern war conditions from A to Z." Thus the organization of the vast new army of Britain came "under the supervision and control of a Minister who began life as a village boy in a cottage of a shoemaker, and under the military direction of a commander-in-chief who also sprang from the common people, and as a young man was an ordinary trooper in the ranks. It could never henceforth be said that Britain, the most aristocratic country on earth, had not been content to hand over the reins to democracy in the greatest emergency in her history." All the world knows what has been accomplished by the British armies in the field recently, as a result of the reorganization instituted by Lloyd George. It is an inspiring story to us in America, and should serve to give us courage and comfort for the conflict which we are just entering into.

More than that, the story told in this book holds out even greater hope for the future of England and consequently of democracy the world over. In England Mr. Dilnot sees already a great transformation in conditions of labor in the social system,

Great Britain will be made over again,—“chastened in some ways, teeming with new thoughts, pulsing with new virility for at least a generation. Class prejudice will be lessened, perhaps in some directions will be completely wiped out.” Old political parties will disappear. The countryside will be transformed. The vast estates, such as existed in the Old South in this country, will be broken up and, with the assistance of the state, cottage dwellings and farm buildings will be put up by the thousands. The laboring man will come into his own. The hours and conditions of labor will be settled amicably, and the trade unions themselves will become less tyrannical and more liberal. The old rule prohibiting the operative from doing more than a certain amount of work in a certain time will be abolished, so that large sums may be earned by those who choose to work hard and to work early and late. There will be practically abolition of unemployment, increased earning powers for individuals, greater output of all kinds of products from the land, and higher profits for the employers, and England will take her place beside the United States as one of the great democracies of the world. Such is the vision Mr. Dilnot has of conditions after the war, and it is full of encouragement for those who see in this war only calamity and a blighted civilization.

But Lloyd George's task will not be complete when the war is over, for he will do his part in the reconstruction and in the insuring of peace for the generations to come. President Wilson's vision of a world-peace brought about by a federation of the nations, considered by some an impracticable proposal, will appeal strongly to the British statesman, who is not a man to be deterred by difficulties or ridicule. “The tenacity and high-mindedness of President Wilson are qualities which will especially appeal to him. He will be able to supplement them with that ingenuity and practicalness which are an integral part of his genius for getting things done. In the collaboration Lloyd George will probably find his culminating task.” These two men thus working together “may write their names indelibly on the history of the world.” Characterized by simplicity and sincerity of tone and style, the book is a worthy tribute to a great man and his great work for humanity and civilization.